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MIHEVC: Looking forward to 'new' Casa Loma

Tags: Casa Loma, Joe Mihevc, Ward 21, St. Paul's

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A revitalized Casa Loma will soon open its doors to Torontonians and tourists.

Since the city took over management of the property from the Kiwanis Club we have been reviewing options for a new operator to manage the property. Through a competitive bid process, the Liberty Entertainment Group has won a 20-year lease, and will operate Casa Loma. In addition to new exhibits and continued public access, they have committed to opening a new restaurant while continuing to operate Casa Loma as a special-event space for weddings and banquets.

Liberty Entertainment is a Toronto-based restaurant and event company with several properties in Toronto and the U.S. With the city, they operate the Liberty Grand at Exhibition Place. Liberty has extensive experience in reviving and restoring heritage sites.

Over the next few years Liberty Entertainment will make significant capital improvements to Casa Loma that will include a restaurant and event rooms at street level, a presentation of architectural models in the attic, new heritage displays on the third floor, and an underground gallery displaying key moments in Toronto's history.

They also plan to create an educational facility where students can learn more about early 20th-century Toronto and the Industrial Revolution. Other improvements will include a new terrace, air conditioning and possibly use of the spectacular towers.

The lease agreement will provide funding to secure Casa Loma for the next generation.

The net proceeds from rent will be put into a trust in Casa Loma's name, to be used on the site for capital repairs and upgrades.

An important next step will be to deal with Casa Loma's "north campus", which includes the potting sheds, stables and hunting lodge. The city will issue a "request for expressions of interest" over the coming months in order to generate ideas and potential uses for this portion of the property.

I have also moved motions at council to consider naming the gardens on the property, and to coordinate wayfinding and signage in the surrounding neighbourhood.

I am looking forward to visiting a revitalized Casa Loma and seeing our city's history on display!

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